

# Details/Information for Canadian Forces (CF) Operation *United Nations Security Force in West New Guinea*

CF Overseas Operations have most often operated within the construct of an international mandate. As such, the International Information is presented first in order to provide the context of the Canadian Operation (displayed second). Eventually, all rotations associated with the particular Canadian operation will also be displayed.

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## International Information

**International Operation Name:** United Nations Security Force in West New Guinea

**International Mission Name:** United Nations Security Force in West New Guinea (UNSF)

**Mandating Organization:** United Nations

**Region Name:** Asia

**Location:** West New Guinea

**Mission Date:** 10/1/1962 - 5/1/1963

### Mission Mandate:

To assist the United Nations Temporary Executive Authority by augmenting the existing police forces in maintaining law and order in West New Guinea.

### Mission/Operation Notes:

After the Second World War, the nascent state of Indonesia (formerly The Dutch East Indies) began to incorporate surrounding islands and territories into its fold. The territory of West Irian/West New Guinea on the western half of the island of New Guinea had been a possession of the Netherlands since 1828. In the treaty creating Indonesia from former Dutch possessions, a decision on the status of West New Guinea was postponed; however, Indonesia coveted this territory and claimed it as its own. Between 1954 and 1961, Indonesia brought the issue of West New Guinea to the United Nations General Assembly on several occasions, all without success. While

the Netherlands did not necessarily disagree with transferring the territory to Indonesia, the means of doing so was problematic.

With increasing tensions between Indonesia and the Netherlands, the Secretary-General, U Thant, offered his good offices as a means to resolve the dispute. Informal talks, with retired United States diplomat Ellsworth Bunker acting as the Secretary-General's representative, started in early 1962, but a stumbling block was Indonesia's insistence that the territory be transferred without consulting the inhabitants. For its part, the Netherlands believed the inhabitants should have the right to self-determination. To support its claims, Indonesia landed paratroops in West New Guinea, while its navy lost a small naval engagement to the Dutch navy. Despite the increased tensions, a preliminary agreement was reached on 31 July, with a final agreement being arrived at on 15 August.

The agreement called for the Netherlands to transfer the administration of West New Guinea to the United Nations as of 1 October. The United Nations Temporary Executive Authority (UNTEA) would then provide governmental and security services until 1 May 1963 at which time the territory would be transferred to Indonesia. Assisting UNTEA would be the United Nations Security Force (UNSF), responsible for augmenting the existing police forces in maintaining law and order in West New Guinea. Pakistan would provide the bulk of the personnel for UNSF (1500 soldiers), including the force commander, while the United States provided a USAF detachment flying C-47 Dakotas and H-19 helicopters. The Royal Canadian Air Force was requested to provide amphibious Otters.

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## **Canadian Forces (CF) Information (*United Nations Security Force in West New Guinea*)**

**Name:** United Nations Security Force in West New Guinea

**Date:** 10/1/1962 - 4/30/1963

**Canadian Task Force Name Abbreviation:** UNSF

**Canadian Task Force Name Mission Statement:**

To assist the United Nations Temporary Executive Authority by augmenting the existing police forces in maintaining law and order in West New Guinea.

**CF Mission/Operation Notes:**

Canadian planning for a role in West New Guinea began on 16 August 1963

when Canada was requested to send an air advisor to the UNSF Commander and a float-equipped Otter with flying and ground crew. RCAF headquarters suggested that two Otters and an air advisor would be necessary. The request went before Cabinet on 29 August and the request was approved.

On 30 August, two CC-130 Hercules aircraft left RCAF Station Trenton, westward bound for West New Guinea. Inside were two disassembled Otters, spare parts and 11 members of what was to become No. 116 Air Transport Unit (ATU). The Hercules were so crowded that some members of No. 116 ATU rode inside the Otters.

They, and the air advisor, arrived in West New Guinea on 3 September. W/C Herbert remained stationed at UNSF headquarters in Hollandia, 275 miles to the east of the remaining Canadians, arranging and coordinating the daily airlift requirements.

Once UNTEA assumed responsibility for West New Guinea, No. 116 ATU began operations on 12 September, under Command of the local contingent. Most trips involved carrying passengers, mail and fresh food to the Pakistani garrisons throughout the territory. These were supplemented by flights carrying UN personnel on inspections.

In the seven months that No. 116 ATU operated under UNSF and UNTEA, its 11 members supported and flew 675 hours under some of the most trying conditions in the world. This was accomplished without a single accident. W/C Herbert, as Air Advisor, coordinated all air movements and the re-supply of 1,500 Pakistani soldiers and various UN officials. The transfer of power from UNTEA to Indonesia did not resolve the West New Guinea problem, and the rights of its people to self-determination – this only occurred in 1969.

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